

Student's Guide: Dialectical Materialism

SUBJECT	TEACHER	READINGS	DATE AND TIME
Dialectical Materialism	Chairman Omali Yeshitela	Stalin: Dialectical & Historical Materialism Yeshitela: The Dialectics of the Black Revolution	July 7, 2014

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<p>OBJECTIVES OF THE CLASS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To instill a thorough understanding of Dialectical Materialism in the students. 2. To show how Dialectical Materialism is a tool that Chairman Omali Yeshitela used to develop the theory of African Internationalism. 3. To show the difference between dialectics and metaphysics and materialism and idealism. 4. To show how a dialectical approach to the world and society coupled with the theory of African Internationalism empowers the African working class to struggle for and win our national liberation and unification.
<p>THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS SUBJECT</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dialectical Materialism is a tool to see the world as knowable and changeable. It informs us that we can understand the world and have a responsibility to change it. 2. Dialectical Materialism is the method of investigation and analysis with which Chairman Omali Yeshitela developed the theory of African Internationalism, which analyzes the world through the standpoint of the African working class. 3. DM is often considered the same thing as Marxism, but this is not true. DM is actually the method of investigation that helped us understand that Marx is totally wrong. 4. Contrary to what we are told by the oppressor white ruling class there is nothing that cannot be known, understood and changed by African workers and oppressed peoples if we look at it through the lens of African Internationalism. 5. A <i>dialectical</i> method sees all beings and phenomena in the world as interconnected, in constant movement and undergoing constant change. There is nothing in the world that is static and unchangeable. 6. A phenomenon is anything that that can be perceived as an

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- occurrence or fact by the senses.
7. Dialectics shows us that something changes and develops because of the contradictions and the struggles between opposing forces that exist inside of it.
 8. Everything in nature is in the process of coming into being and dying away.
 9. DM exposes the unity of opposites. There can be no up without down; no oppressor nation without the oppressed nation. This is the basis of the contradictions in every situation.
 10. Dialectics is the direct opposite of metaphysics.
 11. Metaphysics is an abstract, bourgeois, white view of the world that sees the world is static and unchangeable.
 12. Dialectics understands the world is in constant change and transformation sees the process of development as more than just growth. Tiny quantitative changes in a situation lead to greater changes and ultimately to a qualitative change.
 13. *Quantitative* change is change in degree.
 14. By contrast, a *qualitative* change is when something changes so much it is transformed into something else entirely.
 15. For example, when water boils it becomes steam or when it freezes it becomes ice. A caterpillar transforms into a butterfly.
 16. This is why Chairman Omali is always summing up the crisis of imperialism.
 17. Ultimately all of the individual crises that we see daily resulting from the worldwide resistance of oppressed peoples—the crises of the economy, war, climate change etc will transform parasitic capitalism by cutting off its host and bringing it down—a qualitative change.
 18. Dialectical materialism helps us to understand that as Chairman Omali says, capitalism was born parasitic through the European assault on Africa and enslavement and genocide of African and other oppressed peoples around the world.
 19. Our oppression today makes up the pedestal upon which capitalism and the white nation exist and function. When we take back our stolen labor, resources and land imperialism's pedestal will fall.
 20. When we say materialism we are not talking about consumerism or wanting material possessions.
 21. Philosophical materialism is the way of understanding the world that recognized the material basis of social existence and development. Materialism is the opposite of idealism.
 22. Idealism means that ideas in our heads are primary or come from a "universal spirit." Idealists believe that the material world exists only in our minds, perceptions and ideas.
 23. Dialectical materialism understands that matter is primary.

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Our brains are a material organ of our physical bodies, not the other way around.

24. Matter is not a product of the mind but the mind is the product of matter. The brain is matter that thinks.
25. Matter exists independently of our ability to perceive it. When matter impacts on our brain activity we experience sensations and thoughts. The brain thinks very highly of itself.
26. Idealism is the opposite of the scientific approach. Idealism says we cannot know the world and its laws.
27. Idealism is the basis of the belief in god, religion and superstition.
28. By contrast, dialectics is based on science.
29. Philosophical materialism tells us that nothing is unknowable; there are only things that are still not known but which can be known by the efforts of science and practice.
30. We understand that the same scientific dialectical and materialist laws that apply to nature and external reality also apply to society.
31. Even though science is used by bourgeois society in the fields of biology or mathematics, it is not consistent.
32. As Stalin wrote, "Hence the practical activity of the party of the proletariat must not be based on the good wishes of 'outstanding individuals,' not on the dictates of 'reason,' 'universal morals,' etc, but on the laws of development of society and on the study of these laws."
33. Stalin wrote: "the bond between science and practical activity, between theory and practice, their unity, should be the guiding star of the party of the proletariat."
34. Chairman Omali tells us that the African People's Socialist Party is the Party of practice, and practice is primary. African Internationalism is a theory of practice.
35. Marx said, "When theory grips the masses it becomes a material force."
36. That means that when the African working class wipes out the bourgeois ideas in our heads, embraces African Internationalism as our own we can organize to win our liberation.
37. This is a statement of the significance of the work of the Party to spread African Internationalism as a tool of revolutionary transformation.
38. Historical materialism means that we apply the scientific, dialectical materialist approach to society.
39. Historical materialism holds that the character of every society is determined by its *means of production*, its method of producing the means of life necessary for human existence—food, clothing, footwear, houses, fuel, instruments of production etc.
40. The *relations of production* is the relationship between those

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- who own the means of production—factories, workplaces and resources for producing goods—and those who do the work.
41. Marx, Engels and others erroneously believed there were five main universal types of means of production and social development—that this was a law of society, happening in the same way all over the world.
 42. These “stages of society” were called: primitive communal, slave, feudal, capitalist and socialist.
 43. The Marxists also believed that each of these types was a “higher” level of development than the one that came before it.
 44. The Marxists believed that the world went from one stage to the next through struggle that resulted from the contradictions in each stage of society.
 45. Primitive communal: The food, housing etc produced by traditional societies that are procured by working together and sharing the goods. This was based on social or common ownership of the means of production and social or common labor and land.
 46. Slave society: the second “stage” of society, in which during ancient times there was private ownership of the means of production and also actual private ownership of the worker. In ancient Greece and Rome the majority of the population was enslaved.
 47. Under feudalism the feudal lord owns the means of production—the land to which the serf or farm worker is tied.
 48. Under capitalism, the capitalist owns the means of production, the large factories, mills, workplaces and industries. The labor is produced by workers who must sell their labor power to the capitalist in order to survive.
 49. Under socialism there is social, collective workers’ ownership of the means of production.
 50. Chairman Omali Yeshitela and the theory of African Internationalism challenge the idea that these so-called stages of society are universal and that each represents a higher level of society than the previous one.
 51. The Chairman says, “There is a dialectical relationship between African impoverishment and the wealth and well-being of white people on the planet Earth.” This is the ultimate contradiction for capitalism today.
 52. Africans are told that white people are rich and Africans are poor because African people are less civilized.
 53. These are bourgeois, white nationalist concepts based on idealism and metaphysics that keep us oppressed and powerless.
 54. The idea that human society developed vertically from primitive communalism to slavery to feudalism, capitalism and socialism, each one representing a higher stage of

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	<p>development is also white nationalist and metaphysical.</p> <p>55. We are told that society develops from contradictions in society. So why would "primitive" communalism where everyone shared food and housing and there were no classes, "develop" into a "higher" stage called slavery in which the owner had the power of life and death over the enslaved?</p> <p>56. Also the Chairman points out that what the Marxists called "primitive communalism" was based on a study of Indigenous traditional society in North America, a society which is similar to African traditional society.</p> <p>57. These Indigenous societies were matriarchal and collective. They didn't even exist in Europe where the ancient societies were violent and oppressive and where women were oppressed.</p> <p>58. The Chairman asks, how can you go from feudalism, where the lords owned the land and nearly owned the serfs, to capitalism where Europe and all classes of Europeans became the wealthiest, most powerful system in the history of the world?</p> <p>59. What is missing is what Marx called the "primitive accumulation of capital," Europe's imperialist, parasitic, genocidal, violent attack on Africans and Indigenous peoples everywhere stealing their labor, land, vast resources and intellectual knowledge.</p> <p>60. Capitalism, the Chairman says, could not have developed out of the contradictions inherent to feudalism. Europe went outward to Africa in an imperialist assault and beyond and capitalism was born at our expense.</p> <p>61. Capitalism is a single system affecting the whole world. White people's wealth and Africa's poverty are the two dialectical sides of capitalism.</p> <p>62. The contradictions that will bring down capitalism are not those between the white workers and white bosses. It is the contradictions between the oppressed nations and the oppressors.</p> <p>63. When we who make up the pedestal rise up parasitic capitalism will die.</p> <p>64. The Party of the African working class, armed with African Internationalism is the force that will bring down parasitic capitalism in the process of uniting and liberating Africa and African people everywhere.</p> <p>65.</p>
<p>READINGS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Materialism and the Dialectical Method and Historical Materialism</i> by Maurice Cornforth 2. <i>Dialectical and Historical Materialism</i> by JV Stalin 3. "Dialectics of the Black Revolution" by Chairman Omali Yeshitela

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<p>TEACHING TOOLS YOU WILL USE</p>	<p>1. PowerPoint presentation</p>
<p>QUIZ QUESTIONS STUDENTS MUST ANSWER</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is it important for us to understand dialectical materialism? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How is it different from the way that imperialist white power sees the world and projects it on to African people? b. Is dialectical materialism the same as "Marxism"? Why? c. How does dialectical materialism when tied to African Internationalism help us understand the world to actually change it? d. Can everything really be known by African workers? e. What do the church and preachers say about that? 2. How would you define the dialectical method? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are there things that will never change and that are destined to be as they are? b. What is a phenomenon? c. Are beings, social systems and phenomena in the world static and isolated from each other? d. According to dialectical materialism, what brings about change? e. Why is this important for an African worker to understand? 3. What is the unity of opposites? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Why is that important? b. What is metaphysics? c. Why do we say metaphysics is the opposite of dialectics? d. What is the difference between qualitative change and quantitative change? e. Give an example related to the struggle of African people. 4. What is materialism? Is it the same as consumerism? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is the opposite of materialism? b. Which is primary, our brain or our soul? c. How is the brain defined under the dialectical method? d. We are always taught that idealism is good. How do you answer that? e. What is the scientific approach? 5. What is historical materialism? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Under historical materialism what is the determining factor of every society? b. What is the means of production? c. What is the relations of production?

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">d. What does it mean when we say, "When theory grips the masses it becomes a material force"?6. What are the five stages of society that Marx and Engels believed were universal in history?<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Briefly describe the five stages.b. What did Marx believe caused these societies to go from one stage to the next?c. What is the Chairman's answer to Marx's belief that each stage of society is a higher level than the last?7. What is "missing link" that the Chairman exposes between Marx's stages of feudalism and capitalism?<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. What is the true meaning of Marx's definition of primitive accumulation of capital?b. What does the Chairman say that Europeans did to actually be able to go from feudalism to capitalism?c. How was capitalism actually born?8. What are the key factors that will actually overturn capitalism?<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Why won't white workers be able to overturn capitalism?b. What is the pedestal that the Chairman talks about?c. Why does the Chairman say that capitalism is parasitic?d. Why does it take the Party of the African working class armed with the theory of African Internationalism to overturn capitalism? |
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